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CORINT
Satellite file
COR - 0718

24 February 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Plans)

THROUGH : Acting Chief, DFD W.B.

SUBJECT : COMCHA in 1961

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1. Following our conversation just prior to your departure, I went to see [redacted] on the above subject and reported your feeling that if consideration was to be given to a COMCHA type program in CY 1961 the long lead times required that a decision be made very soon. I suggested that CHALLENGE might not be flying in the summer of 1961 and that unless good SAMOS photography could be available by that summer, there could be a gap in over-flight collection.

2. I stressed that you are not proposing anything but are simply asking a question. At the same time I suggested that other branches of the Agency would be very much interested in the answer to the question and would wish to be consulted.

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3. On the assumption that CHALLENGE would not be operating in 1961, Dr. [redacted] agreed that there probably would be a gap. The SAMOS program now schedules some 6 M1 and M2 shots in the fall of 1960 and the spring of 1961. These carry in-flight processing with readout and in his opinion cannot produce useful ground resolution. The first recoverable camera, the R-5, with potentially good resolution through its [redacted] focal length, is not scheduled until August of 1961, and this date will likely slip.

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4. He then asked what our views were as to the need of filling this gap with COMCHA photography. He asked what we expected to see in 1960 with our present cameras taking into account operational problems and expected cloud cover. Assuming this experience what did we need to see in 1961?

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5. Mr. Heber, [redacted] and I returned on 16 February with answers.

6. Against known targets and suspected target areas, Mr. Heber showed the coverage to date, the CHALLENGE coverage planned through 1960, indicated the gaps that would remain, stressed the value of "repeat" coverage and showed how COMCHA in 1960 or 1961 could be useful to other programs in pointing to areas which should be re-photographed by more sophisticated systems.

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7. [redacted] assumed five successful shots in the 1960 program and showed the coverage that could be expected with three-day orbits. Taking weather into account he concluded that in the interesting areas the chances of photographing any particular point approximated [redacted] He assumed a ground resolution of [redacted] feet.

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3. He expressed doubts that there would be manned overflights of USSR in 1961.

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2. [] ended the discussion by stating his belief that there should be an extension of the COMINT program into 1961. He seemed to feel that there should be a minimum of some eight shots, and agreed that they should carry improved versions of the present system rather than a complete redesign. He hopes to discuss ways and means with you as soon as possible after your return.

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[]
Chief, Development Branch
DPD-DD/P

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